

Nadler: We Must End the War in Afghanistan Now

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) spoke out against the war in Afghanistan , and against the war's funding, at a press conference of the Out of Afghanistan Congressional Caucus.

"Every dollar we spend in Afghanistan, every life we waste there, is a waste," said Nadler. "An intelligent policy is not to try to remake a country that nobody since Genghis Khan has managed to conquer. What makes us think, what arrogance gives us the right to assume that we can succeed where the Moguls, the British, the Soviets, failed...It will take tens of years, hundreds of billions of dollars, tens of thousands of American lives, and we don't need to do it. We don't need to do it. We, frankly, have no right to do it. It's a fool's errand, and I just hope and pray that we get wise enough to stop sending our young men and women to waste their lives there, and our money that could be used to prop up our own people."

Below is the text of Nadler's remarks, as delivered:

"I am Congressman Jerry Nadler of New York. I got started in politics in opposition to the war in Vietnam because we thought that it was a mistake. I don't think that too many historians would disagree today - that every dollar spent and every life wasted in Vietnam was just that - a waste. It did not enhance the security of this country by one bit because it was based on a false premise.

"Afghanistan is the same. Every dollar we spend, every life we waste, is a waste. It does not enhance the security of the United States, which is what ought to be our goal. We were attacked on 9/11 by Al Qaeda. Al Qaeda is our enemy and we must fight them. Al Qaeda had bases in Afghanistan; it made sense to go in and destroy those bases, and we did. We have every right, we have every duty to destroy bases, to take out bases that are being used to plot attacks on the United States. But we are told today that there are fewer than one hundred Al Qaeda personnel in all of Afghanistan - their bases are in Pakistan, but we are not invading Pakistan. They have bases in Somalia and Yemen, but we are not invading Somalia and Yemen, G-d forbid we should.

"An intelligent policy might be to attack the bases from which mayhem is being plotted against the United States wherever they are. An intelligent policy is not to try to remake a country that nobody since Genghis Khan has managed to conquer. What makes us think, what arrogance gives us the right to assume that we can succeed where the Moguls, the British, the Soviets, failed. No government in Afghanistan, no government in Kabul, has ever been able to make its run and rule the country.

"Why have we undertaken to invent a government that is not supported by the majority of the people, that is corrupt, and to impose its will, to impose it on the country? Afghanistan is in the middle of what is, at this point, a 35 year civil war. We have no business intervening in that civil war, we have no ability to win it for one side or the other, and we have no necessity to win it for one side or the other. We have the duty to make sure that bases are not used, but bases can be attacked, specific bases. We don't have to - this whole idea of counter-insurgency, that we are going to persuade the people, those left alive after our firepower is applied, to love the government that we like is absurd.

"It will take tens of years, hundreds of billions of dollars, tens of thousands of American lives, and we don't need to do it. We don't need to do it. We, frankly, have no right to do it. It's their country. If they want to have a civil war, we can't stop them. We can't choose the rulers that they have, we don't have to like the rulers that they have, we don't have to like their choices. It's not up to us.

"We should not be spending - aside from making sure that specific bases are not being used against us - we should not be spending a nickel, should not be wasting a life. And the lives that are being spent there by our

brave men and women are being wasted, because they're being spent in pursuit of an unintelligent, unthought-through, unachievable, and unnecessary goal.

"So we ought to pull our troops out as rapidly as possible, and I don't mean by as rapidly as possible as soon as the Afghans can take over. Why are all the Afghans fighting on the other side? We can't train the Afghans on our side to fight, why? Not because they're not bright, not because they're any less literate or more literate than the Taliban. Because the people fighting on our side have no will. They don't have the motive. You can't instill that. If they had the will and the motive they wouldn't need our help. Without the will and the motive, our help cannot help.

"So, it's a fool's errand, and I just hope and pray that we get wise enough to stop sending our young men and women to waste their lives there, and our money that could be used to prop up our own people."